couched in other words or another one. For reasons sometimes originate from examples. Similarly, it is fitting to associate reasons with authority and wise sayings. I have already spoken about the variety of examples. Comparisons are derived from all kinds of things, so it will be an advantage to be well acquainted with the species and natures of as many living creatures, plants, and other things as possible as well as having a stock of impressive passages from philosophers and orators, theologians and historians. If we are skilled in combining all of these we shall never be at a loss for words, and by variety we shall easily avoid satiety. In this variety we shall make careful use of rhetorical elaboration and inference. The following will serve as an example of this brief set of rules.

47 / An example of a letter of persuasion[1]

'Although in your exceptional wisdom, my beloved kinsman, you are wise enough of yourself and need no counsel from others, yet I thought I owed it to our long friendship, which, beginning almost from the cradle,[2] has grown through the years, and to your great kindness to me, and lastly to our very close relationship, that I should give you willing and frank advice in matters which I judged to be of great importance for the honour and welfare of you and your family, if indeed I wished to be the grateful and appreciative friend you have always considered me to be. There are times when we perceive others' interests better than our own. I have very often followed your advice in my affairs and have found out that it was as fruitful as it was friendly. Now if you in turn are willing to follow mine in your own affairs, I think that in the outcome I shall not be sorry for having given the advice nor you for having followed it.

On 8 April, when I was at my house in the mountains, Antonius Baldus, who as you know has your interests very much at heart and who has from the first been intimately connected with your family, had dinner with me. It was a joyless and tearful repast. He told me to our great mutual sorrow that your mother, a woman of great virtue, had departed this life; that your sister, overcome with grief and loneliness, had joined a group of women vowed to virginity, and that consequently the hope of prolonging your line had fallen upon you alone. He also informed me that your friends were of one accord in recommending to you, with the offer of a large dowry, a girl of noble birth, exceptional beauty, and excellent character, and who was very much in love with you, but that you, whether from inability to master your grief or from religious scruples, were so set on remaining celibate that neither devotion to your family, nor desire for offspring, nor the advice, prayers, and tears of your friends could induce you to abandon your resolve.

Nevertheless, perhaps on my advice you will change your mind and

renounce the single state, a barren way of life hardly becoming to a man, and surrender yourself to holy wedlock. I do not wish in this exhortation to use to my advantage the dearness of your family, which for that matter should have prevailed over your feelings, or my own influence, but I shall show by the clearest of proofs that this alternative would be far more honourable, profitable, and pleasant for you, and, one might add, necessary even in this day and age.

First of all, if you are moved by considerations of honour, which should be a matter of primary importance among men of upright life, what is more honourable than marriage, which was honoured by Christ himself, who not only thought it fit to be present at a wedding[3] together with his mother, but also sanctified the wedding feast with the first fruits of his miracles? What could be holier than that which the father of all creation founded, enjoined, and sanctified, and which nature herself consecrated? What is more worthy of praise, when those who find fault with it are condemned for heresy? Marriage is as honourable as the name of heretic is infamous.[4] What is more just than to return to posterity what we ourselves have received from our forebears? What is more ill-advised than in the pursuit of sanctity to shun as unholy what God himself, the source and father of all holiness, wished to be held most holy? What is more inhuman than to shrink from the laws of the human condition? What is more ungrateful than to deny to one's descendants that which you would not be able to deny if you had not received it from your ancestors?

If we seek the author of marriage, we discover that it was founded and instituted not by Lycurgus,[5] or Moses, or Solon,[6] but by the sovereign maker of all things, and from the same it received praise, and by the same it was made honourable and holy. In the beginning, when he created man out of clay, God realized that man's life would be thoroughly unhappy and unpleasant unless he joined Eve to him as a companion. Therefore he did not bring man's wife out of the clay from which he had brought man, but out of Adam's ribs, so that we might clearly understand that nothing should be dearer to us, nothing more closely joined, nothing more tightly glued to us than a wife.

After the flood, when God was reconciled to the race of mortals, he proclaimed, as we read, as his first law, not that they should embrace celibacy, but that they should "increase and multiply and replenish the earth."[7] But how could they, unless they gave thought to wedlock? And without adducing the freedom of the Mosaic law or the necessity of those times as a reason, what other meaning can be attributed to the approval of Christ repeated and confirmed in the gospel writings? "For this cause," he says, "shall a man leave father and mother and cleave to his wife."[8] What is

more holy than loyalty to one's parents? Yet conjugal fidelity is preferred to this. On whose authority? On God's authority, to be sure. At what time? Not only in the time of Judaism but also during the Christian era.

Father and mother must be abandoned, and one must cleave to one's wife. A son set free begins to be his own master. A son disowned ceases to be a son. But death alone dissolves wedlock, if indeed it does dissolve it. It is only dissolved[9] in the case of those who seek another marriage. As long as wedded love persists, the marriage is not considered to be dissolved.

Now if the other sacraments, which are the chief support of the church of Christ, are observed with scrupulous respect, who cannot see that much reverence is due this one, which was instituted by God before all the others? The rest were instituted upon earth, but this in paradise; the rest for a remedy, this for partnership in happiness. The rest were provided for fallen nature, this alone was granted for its preservation. If we hold as sacrosanct laws passed by mortals, will not the law of wedlock have the most sanctity of all, because we have received it from the giver of life, and because it alone came into existence almost simultaneously with the human race itself?

Finally, to strengthen the law by example, when Christ was invited as a young man to a marriage feast (as was mentioned above), he attended willingly with his mother; and not only did he attend, but he honoured it by an extraordinary favour,[10] choosing no other occasion to inaugurate his miracles. "Why then," you will say, "did Christ himself abstain from wedlock?" As if indeed there were not very many aspects of Christ's life which should excite our wonder rather than our imitation. He was born without a father, was given birth without pain to his mother, and came forth from a sealed sepulchre.

What is there in him that is not above nature? Such attributes belong to him alone. Let us who live under the law of nature look up to those things that are above nature, but emulate what is within our capacity.

"But he chose to be born of a virgin." Yes, of a virgin, but a married virgin. A virgin mother befitted God; the fact that she was married signified the path we should follow. The state of virginity befitted the woman who by the inspiration of the heavenly spirit was to bear, herself immaculate, an immaculate child. Yet Joseph her spouse commends to us the laws of chaste wedlock. How could Christ have better commended the union of wedlock than through the mystery of that joining, stupendous even to angelic minds, of divine nature with a human body and soul; or in declaring his amazing and undying love for his church, what greater commendation than to call himself its husband and the church his bride? "Marriage is a great sacrament,"[11] says Paul, "in Christ and the church." If there had been any holier bond in the universe, any stricter compact than wedlock, he would

certainly have taken his illustration from that. What do we read like this concerning celibacy anywhere in the sacred writings? Wedlock is called honourable, and the marriage bed undefiled[12] by the apostle Paul,[13] but celibacy is never even named there. Nor is it excused except by the compensation of a greater good. In all other respects one who follows the law of nature and procreates children is to be preferred to one who perseveres in the single state simply in order to have a more independent life. We read that men who are truly chaste and virgins are praised, but celibacy in itself receives no praise.[14] Now the law of Moses curses barren wedlock,[15] and we read that some were excluded from the public altars on this account. For what reason then? Simply because like useless drones living for themselves they increased the race by no offspring. In Deuteronomy[16] it is set forth as the greatest proof of God's blessing for the Israelites that no one among them would be barren, neither male nor female. Leah[17] is said to have been despised by her lord for not bearing children. Moreover in the Psalms[18] a wife's fruitfulness is included among the principal portions of blessedness. "Your wife," says the psalmist, "is like a fruitful vine, your sons are like olive shoots round your table." But if the law[19] condemns and stigmatizes a barren marriage, it has condemned the unmarried much more severely. If nature is not exempt from penalty, still less will personal inclination escape it. If those whose good will has been thwarted by nature are subject to condemnation, what do those deserve who have made no efforts to avoid sterility?

The laws of the Hebrews[20] awarded this privilege to marriage, that one who had taken a bride would not be compelled to go to war that same year. The state is in danger unless there are those to protect it by force of arms, but its destruction is assured unless there are those who through the benefit of wedlock make up for the loss of young manhood diminished by death. Roman laws[21] also inflicted a penalty[22] upon those who were unmarried, and excluded them from the offices of the state.[23] But those who had enriched the state with children were decreed a reward from public funds as having served it well. Proof of this is the law of three children,[24] not to mention others.

The early laws imposed penalties on the unmarried, which, though modified by the emperor Constantine[25] in deference to the Christian religion, still prove how detrimental it was to the republic that the state either be reduced in numbers through the desire for the single life or be populated with bastards. Moreover, Augustus as censor[26] took proceedings against a soldier on the grounds that he had disobeyed the laws in taking a wife, and his life would have been in danger had he not shown that he was the father of three children. The laws of the Caesars show favour towards

the married state by the fact that they abolished the imposition of widowhood introduced by Miscella,[27] and, removing all penalties, declared that agreements of this kind should be considered null and void because they had been entered into contrary to justice and equity. There is in addition the statement of Ulpian[28] that dowry suits were always and everywhere awarded unique status, which would not have been so if there were no special advantages inherent in the state of matrimony. Wedlock was held in honour but fertility even more so. As soon as one acquired the name of father, he was made eligible for inheritance[29] and every bequest, even one that had been rendered void,[30] as is evident from the words of the satirist:[31] "Through me you may become an heir / To all bequests, e'en those that fall by escheat." The three children's privilege brought more advantages, including exemption from serving on public missions. Five children[32] secured exemption from personal obligations as well, such as guardianship.[33] To those who had thirteen children the emperor Julian granted exemption not only from serving as decurion,[34] but from any duties whatsoever. The wisest legislators make no secret of the reason for such great favour. What is more blessed than immortality? This gift, denied by nature, is bestowed artificially on the state by marriage as far as it lies in its power. Who does not wish to be remembered by posterity? No arches, pyramids, or inscriptions prolong our memory more surely than does the begetting of children. Albinus[35] won his case before the emperor Hadrian with nothing else in his favour except that he had bequeathed numerous offspring to his country. For this reason the emperor, at the expense of the public treasury, allowed the children to inherit their father's property in its entirety, because he perceived that the empire received greater support from the begetting of children than from the accretion of money. Finally, other laws are not suited to all places and all times; the law of wedlock alone concerns all nations in the world for all time.

Lycurgus[36] passed laws that those who did not take wives should be excluded in summer from games and public shows, and in winter should go about the forum without clothing, and admit with curses upon their own heads that they were suffering a just penalty for not obeying the laws.

If you now want to know the value placed on marriage by the ancients, consider the penalty for a violated marriage. The Greeks once decreed that the violation of the rights of marriage had to be vindicated by a ten years' war. In addition, not only Roman law[37] but the laws of the Hebrews[38] and the barbarian nations prescribed capital punishment for adulterers. A thief was penalized by a fourfold[39] repayment; an adulterer's crime was expiated by execution. Among the Hebrews stoning at the hands of the people was the fate of one who violated the institution without which the people would no longer exist. Not content with this, the severity of the laws allowed for an

adulterer caught *in flagrante* to be stabbed to death without trial and without legal rights, evidently according to a husband's indignation what it grants only reluctantly to a man defending his own life from danger, which shows that the taking away of a wife was viewed as a more grievous wrong than the taking of a life. Certainly wedlock must be considered an institution of the greatest sanctity if its violation must be expiated by human blood, and the avenging of it need not await laws or judgment, a right which does not exist even in the case of parricide.

Yet why be concerned with written laws? This is the law of nature, not inscribed on any bronze tablets, but deeply implanted in our minds; if anyone does not obey it, he should not even be considered human, much less a good citizen. For if, as the Stoics, the most perceptive of philosophers, maintain, to live rightly is to follow the instigations of nature, what is so consistent with nature as marriage? For nothing has been so firmly implanted by nature, not only in mankind but in all living things, as the instinct in each of them to preserve its own species from destruction and render it in some way immortal by the propagation of offspring. Everyone must know that this cannot come about without the bond of wedlock.

It seems all the more shameful that dumb herds should obey nature's laws, but men, like the giants, should declare war upon nature. If we look at creation with eyes that are not blinded, we shall understand that nature intended that there should be some kind of marital union in all species. I shall say nothing about trees, in which on the sure authority of Pliny[40] sexual union is found with a clear distinction of sex, particularly in palm trees,[41] so that unless the male tree[42] rests the weight of its branches upon the female trees around it as if with the urge for intercourse these will certainly remain barren. The same writer points out that there are authorities who believe that there is a male and female sex in everything the earth produces.[43] I say nothing about precious stones,[44] in which the same author says sex is to be found, and he is not alone. Has not God linked all things by certain ties so that they seem to need each other? What of the heavens turning[45] with continual motion? Does it not play the part of a husband as it fructifies the earth, parent of all things, beneath it, making it produce every manner of thing by the infusion of its seed?

But it would take too long to run through every detail. What is the point of all this? Simply to have you understand that all things exist and are bound together in the association of wedlock; that without this they all dissolve, perish, and fall away. The tale is devised by those wise poets of antiquity, who took pains to clothe the teaching of philosophy in the wrappings of fable, that giants,[46] the serpent-footed sons of earth, piled up mountains to the sky and waged war with the gods. What is the meaning of

this story? Evidently it signifies that some monstrous, savage, and uncivilized men felt a great loathing for the harmony of wedlock, and for this were hurled down by a thunderbolt, that is, they perished utterly, since they shunned the sole means of preserving the human race. The same poets record that Orpheus, poet and lute-player, moved the hardest of stones with his singing. What did they mean? They meant to show that men as unfeeling as stone, who were living after the manner of wild beasts, were rescued from promiscuity[47] by this wise and eloquent hero and initiated into the holy laws of marriage. It is clear that one who is not affected by the love of matrimony is more like a stone than a human being; he is an enemy of nature, a rebel against God who brings destruction upon himself by his own folly. For a man who plots the destruction of his race is crueler than one who plots only his own destruction.[48]

Come then, since we are entering into fables that have nothing of the fabulous about them, when the same Orpheus in the underworld had induced Pluto himself and the shades to allow him to carry off Eurydice, what was the poets'[49] intention but to commend to us conjugal love, which even in the underworld was held to be holy and sacred? For this same reason antiquity set Jupiter Gamelius[50] over the rite of marriage and named Juno Lucina,[51] as divine *pronuba*,[52] to be present with her divine assistance to those in childbirth. They erred, of course, in the names of the deities, owing to their superstitious beliefs; but they did not err in judging marriage to be a holy and worthy institution which is of concern to the gods. Rites and laws varied among peoples and nations, to be sure, but no race was ever so barbarous, so remote from all human feeling, that the name of wedlock was not regarded as holy and worthy of veneration among them. It was held sacred by Thracians, Sarmatians, Indians, Greeks, Latins, even by the "Britons who dwell at the ends of the earth,"[53] or others even more remote than these, if they exist. Why is that so? Because all must share in common what was implanted by the common parent of men, so deeply implanted that this instinct is felt not only by pigeons and turtle-doves, but even by the wildest of beasts, since even lions are gentle towards their mates, and tigers fight for their cubs.[54] The instinct to protect their young drives donkeys[55] through fires that stand in their way. This is called the law of nature, and it is both efficacious and all-embracing. Therefore, just as a conscientious grower is not one who, content with things as they are, manages his fully grown trees with sufficient care but does not bother about propagating or grafting, with the result that within a few years his orchards, however carefully cultivated, must come to nothing; so a man must be reckoned as less than a conscientious citizen of his country who, content with the population as it is, takes no thought about adding to its number. No one has ever been held to

be an outstanding citizen who has not made it his concern to produce children and educate them properly. Among the Hebrews and Persians it was to one's credit to have as many wives as possible, as if the country owed most to the man who had enriched it with the most numerous offspring.

Surely you are not anxious to appear holier than Abraham himself? He would not have been called "the father of many generations"[56] and that with God's own blessing, if he had shunned cohabitation with a wife. Surely you do not seek to be considered more scrupulous than Jacob, who did not hesitate to purchase the embraces of Rachel by such a lengthy servitude;[57] or wiser than Solomon – yet what a large flock of wives[58] he kept at home! Or more chaste than Socrates, who, we read, put up at home with the shrewish Xanthippe not so much, as he jokingly used to say, that he might learn tolerance at home but that he might not seem to have been delinquent in the service of nature. For the one man judged to be wise by the oracle of Apollo[59] understood that he was begotten under this law, born for this law, and owed this debt to nature. For if what the ancient philosophers said was correct, if it was approved with good reason by our theologians, and if it was deservedly repeated everywhere in the form of a saying that neither God nor nature does anything without purpose, then why did nature assign us these members[60] and add these incitements and this power of reproduction, if celibacy is to be considered praiseworthy? If someone gave you a splendid gift, a bow, or fine raiment, or a sword, you would seem unworthy of what you received if you were unwilling or unable to use it. Since everything else has been designed with a purpose, it hardly seems probable that in this one matter alone nature was asleep.

I have no patience with those who say that sexual excitement is shameful and that venereal stimuli have their origin not in nature, but in sin. Nothing is so far from the truth. As if marriage, whose function cannot be fulfilled without these incitements, did not rise above blame. In other living creatures where do these incitements come from? From nature or from sin? From nature, of course. It must be borne in mind that in the appetites of the body there is very little difference between man and other living creatures.[61] Finally, we defile by our imagination what of its own nature is fair and holy. If we were willing to evaluate things not according to the opinion of the crowd, but according to nature itself, how is it less repulsive to eat, chew, digest, evacuate, and sleep after the fashion of dumb animals, than to enjoy lawful and permitted carnal relations?

"But one must obey virtue rather than nature." As if anything which is at variance with nature could be called virtue! For if it did not proceed from nature, there would be nothing that could be further perfected by training and discipline. But you are attracted by the mode of life of the apostles, who both embraced celibacy themselves and encouraged others to that kind of

life. Indeed, let the apostles be imitated by apostolic men, who, since it is their mission to teach and instruct the populace, cannot at one and the same time satisfy both a flock and a wife. Yet it is known that some of the apostles had wives. Let us leave celibacy for bishops. Why do you observe the practice of the apostles when you are far removed from the apostolic function, being in fact a layman and a private individual? They were allowed the privilege of being free from the duties of wedlock, so that they might have more opportunity to produce a more plentiful offspring for Christ. Let that be the prerogative of priests and monks, who evidently have succeeded to the regimen of the Essenes.[62] Your situation is quite different. "But Christ himself," you will say, "declared blessed those who became eunuchs[63] for the kingdom of God's sake." I do not reject the authority of this statement, but I offer an interpretation of its meaning. First, I consider that this dogma of Christ pertains to those times when it was right for an ecclesiastic to be kept as free as possible from all worldly affairs. He had to run about from one country to another, threatened by persecutors on all sides. But nowadays conditions and times are such that you would not find anywhere a less defiled purity of morals than among the married.[64] Let the swarms of monks and virgins exalt their own rule of life as they will, let them boast as much as they like of their liturgical functions and their acts of worship, in which they excel all others; the holiest kind of life is wedlock, purely and chastely observed. Besides, it is not only the one who lives unmarried who makes himself a eunuch, but one who in chaste and holy fashion carries out the duties of wedlock. I only wish those who conceal their vices behind the high-sounding name of castration, and under the pretence of chastity gratify worse lusts, were truly castrated. I do not think that it becomes my sense of modesty to describe the disgraceful actions which those who oppose nature often fall into. Lastly, Christ does not impose celibacy on anyone; he does, however, openly forbid divorce.[65] In my view it would not be ill advised for the interests and morals of mankind if the right of wedlock were also conceded to priests and monks, if circumstances required it, especially in view of the fact that there is such a great throng of priests everywhere, so few of whom live a chaste life. How much better it would be to turn concubines into wives, so that the women they now keep dishonourably and with troubled conscience might be retained openly with honourable reputation; then they could beget children whom they could love as truly legitimate offspring and educate conscientiously, to whom they would not be a source of shame, and by whom they might be honoured in turn. And indeed, I think the representatives of the bishops would have seen to this long ago, were it not that concubines are a greater source of revenue[66] than wives.

"But virginity is a divine and angelic prerogative, while wedlock is

merely human." I speak now as one man to another, as one commoner to another,[67] as one weak mortal to another. Virginity is certainly worthy of praise, but on the condition that this praise is not transferred to the majority of mankind. If it were to become a general practice, what could be mentioned or imagined more destructive than virginity? Besides, if virginity were to merit special praise in all others, in your case it cannot escape censure, since the duty of preserving from extinction a family that is supremely worthy of immortality will devolve upon you alone. Finally, there is very little distinction between the praise due to virginity and that due to the man who keeps the laws of wedlock unsullied, who keeps a wife for bearing offspring, not for the purpose of lust.

If a brother is bidden to raise up seed for a brother[68] who has died without children, will you allow the hope of your whole line to perish, especially when it has fallen on you alone? I am not unaware that the praise of virginity has repeatedly been sung in huge volumes by the early Fathers, among whom Jerome[69] admires it so much that he all but abuses marriage, and was summoned to recant by some orthodox bishops. However, let us make allowance for the fervour of those times; at the present time, I should wish that those who indiscriminately encourage to celibacy those who are not mature enough to know their own minds should direct similar efforts to presenting a picture of chaste and pure matrimony.[70] The same individuals who are so pleased with virginity are not displeased with warring against the Turks,[71] who outnumber us by so many; if their judgment is correct, it will follow that it should be considered especially right and honourable to strive with all one's might to produce children, and thus provide enough young men to serve in the war. Unless perhaps they think that artillery, missiles, and ships should be provided for this war, but that men are not needed. The same people approve of slaying heathen parents by the sword, so that it may be possible to baptize their children,[72] who are unaware of their newly acquired religion. If that is true, how much more civilized it would be to obtain the same result by the office of wedlock! No nation[73] is so barbarous that it does not execrate the killing of infants. The laws of princes punish with almost equal severity the inducing of abortion and sterility brought on by drugs. Why is that so? Because there is very little difference between the one who cuts short what has begun to be born and one who sees to it that there can be no birth. That which withers away within your body, or is destroyed at great risk to your health, or is ejected in sleep, would have been a human being if only you had been human. The literature of the Hebrews curses the man[74] who, when told to consort with his dead brother's wife, spilled the seed upon the ground so that nothing would be born, and was judged unworthy of life as he had grudged life to a foetus yet to be born.

How very little difference there is between him and those who impose perpetual sterility upon themselves! Does it not seem that they kill as many human beings as would have been born if they had attended to the begetting of children? I ask you, if anyone has a farm with naturally fertile soil that he allows to remain forever uncultivated and barren, should he not be punished by the law, as it is in the country's interests that each one should manage his property well? If a man is punished for neglecting a field that, even if fully cultivated, bears only wheat, or beans, or peas, what penalty does he deserve who refuses to cultivate a farm that when cultivated produces men? In the former case long and hard toil is required, in the latter cultivation is short, and also has the reward of pleasure as an added inducement. So if you are influenced at all by natural feelings, goodness, respect, piety, duty, and virtue, why do you shun what has been instituted by God, sanctioned by nature, prompted by reason, praised in divine and human writings alike, laid down by the law, ratified by the consensus of all peoples, and encouraged by the example of all good men?

But even if many unpleasant things are to be sought after by a good man for no other reason than that they are honourable, then marriage, concerning which it is difficult to determine whether it contains more honour or pleasure, is all the more greatly to be desired. For what is sweeter than living with a woman with whom you are most intimately joined not merely by the bonds of affection but by physical union as well? If we derive much spiritual delight from the kindness of other close relatives and acquaintances, how much more pleasant to have someone with whom to share the secret feelings of the heart, with whom you may talk as if with yourself, to whose loyalty you can safely entrust yourself, who regards your fortune as her own! What happiness there is in the union of husband and wife, than which none greater nor more lasting exists in all of nature! For while we are linked with our other friends by benevolence of mind, with a wife we are joined by the greatest affection, physical union,[75] the bond of the sacrament, and the common sharing of all fortunes. Moreover, how much pretence and bad faith there is in other friendships! Those whom we think to be our dearest friends fail us when fortune's breezes change, like swallows flying away at the end of the summer. At times a more recent friend displaces an old one. I have heard of few whose faithfulness persisted until life's end.

The affection of a wife is not spoilt by faithlessness, is veiled by no pretence, is shattered by no change of fortune; in the end it is severed by death alone, or rather not even by death. She disregards her duties to her parents and sisters and brothers out of love for you, she looks up to you alone, she depends on you, with you she would fain die. If you have wealth, you have someone to look after it and increase it; if you have none, you have

someone who can seek it for you. In times of prosperity, happiness is doubled; in adversity there will be someone to console and assist you, to show her devotion, to wish your misfortune hers. Do you think there is any pleasure to be compared with so close a union? If you are at home, she is there to dispel the tedium of solitude; if abroad, she can speed you on your way with a kiss, miss you when you are away, receive you gladly on your return. She is the sweetest companion of your youth, the welcome comfort of your old age. By nature any association is pleasant for man, seeing that nature begot him for kindness and friendship. Then how can this fail to be the most pleasant of all, in which there is nothing that is not shared? On the contrary, if we see that even the wild beasts dread loneliness and are pleased by companionship, in my view anyone who shuns this most honourable and joyful association should not be accounted as human.

For what is more hateful than a man who, as though born for himself alone, lives for himself, looks out for himself, is sparing or lavish for himself, loves no one, and is loved by no one? Indeed, should not such a monster be thought fit to be driven away from the general fellowship of mankind into the midst of the sea along with the notorious Timon[76] of Athens? I should not presume at this point to set before you those pleasures, the sweetest that nature has bestowed upon mankind, which men of great genius, for some reason or other, have chosen to ignore rather than despise. Yet, who has been born with so stern, not to say stolid, a nature as not to be attracted by pleasures of that kind, especially if they can be enjoyed without offence to God or man and without loss of reputation? Truly I should call him not a man, but a stone, even if bodily pleasure is but a small part of the benefits conferred by wedlock. Suppose, however, that you despise this as unworthy of a true man (though without it we do not deserve the name of true man); let it be set, if you wish, among the least advantages of wedlock, then what could be more lovely than chaste love, or, I should say, what more holy and more honourable?

Meanwhile the pleasant throng of relatives grows larger. The number of parents, brothers, sisters, and nephews is doubled. For nature can grant only one mother and one father. By wedlock a second father and second mother are added, who cannot but attend you with unusual devotion, as one to whom they have entrusted their own flesh. Then what joy it will bring you when your beautiful wife makes you the parent of beautiful offspring; when some tiny Aeneas[77] will play in your hall, who will recall your countenance and that of your wife and will call you by the name of "father" with sweet stammering? To the affection of wedlock there will be added a bond as adamant as steel which not even death can sever. "Happy those," says Horace,[78] "three or more times over, / United by an unbroken bond / Whose

love, unmarred by bitter strife / Will not release them till their dying day." You have those who will give delight to your old age, close your eyes and perform the obsequies, in whom you may seem to be born again, in whose survival you may even be thought not to have died. What you have amassed for yourself does not pass into the hands of alien heirs. Thus when one has the sense of having performed all of life's duties, not even death itself can seem harsh. Old age threatens all of us willy-nilly. In this manner nature has provided that we should grow young again in our children and grandchildren. For who would find old age a burden when he has seen in his son the very features he had as a young man? Death awaits us all.[79] But in this way alone the providence of nature devises a kind of immortality, as it creates one thing from another in such a way that, just as when a shoot springs up again after a tree has been felled, one who dies leaving offspring behind him does not seem to have perished altogether.

Yet I am well aware of the objections you are raising in the mean time. Wedlock is a blessed institution if all turns out favourably, but what if you end up with a difficult or shameless wife, or the children grow up to be disloyal? Cases of wedlock which brought ruin will come to mind. Magnify them as much as you will, these will prove to be faults of human nature, not of wedlock. Believe me, as a rule, only a bad husband gets a bad wife. Besides, it is within your power to choose a good one. What if she should be corrupted? A good wife can certainly be corrupted by a bad husband; a bad wife is usually reformed by a good husband. The accusations we bring against wives are false. No one, if you have faith in my words, ever had a wicked wife except through his own fault. Further, from good parents similar children are born, as a general rule. In fact, whatever their condition of birth, they turn out very much as one shapes them by education. There is no reason to be afraid of jealousy. That is the disease of those who love foolishly. Chaste and lawful love is innocent of jealousy. Why do tragic examples come to mind? This adulteress[80] struck down her husband with an axe; this one got rid of hers by poison; that one through the repugnance of her character drove a man to his death. Why instead does not Cornelia,[81] the wife of Tiberius Gracchus, come to mind? Why not Alcestis,[82] the excellent wife of a not-so-excellent husband? Why not be put in mind of Julia,[83] Pompey's wife, or Portia,[84] the daughter of Cato? Why not Artemisia,[85] worthy of an undying name? Why not Hypsicratea,[86] wife of Mithridates, king of Pontus? Why does not the generosity of Aemilia Tertia[87] come to mind? Or the faithful Turia?[88] Why does Lucretia[89] not present herself, and Lentula?[90] Why not the famous Arria,[91] celebrated by Pliny? Why not countless others whose virtue and good faith towards their spouses could not be altered even by death? You say, "An upright woman is 'a rare bird'[92]

upon the earth." Make yourself worthy of a rare wife. As the wise man[93] says, "A good woman is a good inheritance." Dare to hope for one worthy of your character. Much lies in the choice you make, what you make of her, and how you behave towards her.

"But freedom is pleasanter," you will say. "Whoever takes a wife receives fetters that only death can shake off." But what pleasure can there be for a man who is alone? If freedom is pleasant, I think you should take a partner with whom you may be willing to share that benefit. Yet what is more free than a servitude in which each is so subject to the other that neither wishes to be set free? You are bound to one whom you admit to your friendship, but no one claims that his freedom has been taken away on this account. You are afraid that when your children are taken away by death, you may be plunged into grief in your bereavement. If you are afraid of bereavement, you should take a wife for that very reason, since she alone can guarantee your not being childless. Yet why do you inquire so thoroughly, nay, so anxiously, into all the disadvantages of marriage, as if celibacy had no disadvantages? As if there were any form of human existence not liable to all the hazards of fortune! One who wishes to suffer no ills must depart from this life. But if you are thinking of life in heaven, this mortal life must be called death, not life. If, however, you limit your considerations to the life of man, nothing is more secure, more tranquil, more pleasant, more attractive, or more blissful than wedded life.

Consider[94] the matter from its results. How few are there in your experience who, having once made trial of wedlock, are not eager to try it again! My friend Maurice,[95] whose exceptional wisdom is well known to you, entered into matrimony with a new bride a month after the death of the wife whom he dearly loved. This was not because of his inability to resist sexual desire, but he said that life did not seem real to him without a wife to share all his fortunes. Is not our friend Jovius[96] looking for a fourth wife? He was so deeply in love with them when they were alive that he seemed to admit of no consolation. Notwithstanding, when one died, he was quick to fill the loneliness of his marriage-bed, as if he had felt little love for them. But why are we discussing goodness and pleasure when not only advantage induces us, but necessity impels us to wedlock? Take away marriage, and within a very few years all of mankind must perish utterly. They say that when Xerxes,[97] the famous king of the Persians, was gazing from a high place on his mighty array of men, he could not restrain his tears because sixty years from then not a single one of so many thousands would be alive. Why can we not perceive concerning the whole human race what he understood concerning his troops? If wedlock is taken away, of so many regions, provinces, kingdoms, cities, and assemblies how few will be left a century later!

Let us go then and pay our homage to celibacy, since it is destined to visit eternal destruction on our race! What plague or pestilence sent by the gods above or below could be more pernicious? What more bitter consequences could be feared from any flood? What greater tragedy could be expected even if Phaethon's conflagration should return? In calamities of this kind much remains unharmed, but from the effects of celibacy nothing will be saved. We see what a procession of maladies, how many dangerous situations lie in wait for the meagre race of mankind night and day. How many are carried off by disease, swallowed up by the sea, or snatched away by war? I do not mention the deaths that occur every day. Death hovers all around us:[98] it strikes, seizes, and hastens with all speed to end our race; and yet we admire celibacy and flee from wedlock! Or is it perhaps that the way of life of the Essenes[99] pleases us, or that of the Dulopolites,[100] whose criminal race is being replenished by never failing numbers? Surely we are not waiting for some Jupiter to make us the same gift as he is supposed to have granted to the bees,[101] of having young without intercourse, and gathering the seeds of our descendants from flowers with our mouths? Or do we expect that just as Minerva, as the poets tell, was born from the brain of Jupiter, so children will leap out of our heads? or lastly, trusting the stories of the ancients that men will be produced from the earth,[102] like mice in Egypt,[103] or from the throwing of stones[104] as in the fables,[105] or from the hard trunks of trees?[106] From the bosom of the earth many things are born without our cultivating them. Young shoots often sprout up beneath their parents' shade; but for man nature has willed that there should be this single method of propagation, that by the co-operation of husband and wife the race of mortals should be saved from destruction; but if men were to shun this after your example, not even what you so admire would be able to exist.

Do you admire celibacy and respect virginity? But if you take away the practice of wedlock there will be neither unwedded nor virgins. Why then is virginity preferred and honoured if it involves the abolition of mankind?[107] It has received praise, but in a given period of time and in few individuals. For God wished to show men a kind of picture and likeness of that life in heaven where no women marry[108] or are given in marriage. But for an example a small number is suitable, a large one useless. Not every field, however fertile, is sown to sustain life; but some are neglected, others cultivated to please the eye; for the very abundance allows that in such a vast extent of arable land, a small part may be left barren. But if none were sown, who would not see that we should have to return to acorns? Similarly, amid such a great multitude of men celibacy in a few certainly merits praise, but if extended to all would deserve grievous censure.

Now if in others virginity were to be esteemed a virtue, in your case it would definitely be a vice. For the others will seem to have been interested in

leading a pure life; you will be judged the murderer of your line, because, when you were able to have offspring by honourable wedlock, you allowed it to die out through vile celibacy. It would be permissible from a large brood to consecrate a virgin to God. Countrymen offer the first fruits of their crops to the gods, but not the whole yield; you must remember that you are the sole remnant of your line. There is no difference between killing it off or refusing to preserve it, since you are the only one who could preserve it, and easily at that.

But you protest that your sister's example encourages you towards celibacy. This very reason that you cite should have deterred you most of all from the state of celibacy. You are aware that the hope of your family, which previously was divided between the two of you, has now devolved entirely upon you alone. Some indulgence should be granted to her sex and her years. The girl did wrong because she was overcome with grief; at the instance of foolish women or foolish monks she threw herself into it headlong. You who are the elder must remember that you are a man. She has wished to die together with her ancestors; you will make sure that they do not die. Your sister has withdrawn from her duty; consider now that you must play the part of two. The daughters of Lot[109] did not hesitate to consort with their drunken father, judging it better, even through unholy incest, to take thought for the race than to allow it to die off. Will you not, by a marriage that is honourable, holy, modest, without offence, and that promises great satisfaction, take thought for your family, which otherwise is doomed to extinction?

So let us allow those to imitate the example of Hippolytus[110] in the pursuit of celibacy who can be husbands, but not fathers, or whose slender means are insufficient for rearing children, or whose line can be continued through the instrumentality of others, or else is of such a kind that the country is the better for its extinction rather than its continuance, or who by some special favour of the eternal Godhead have been set apart from the general lot of mankind and marked out for some heavenly function – and their number is amazingly small.[111] In your case, on the evidence of a doctor who is quite skilled and honest, you seem to give promise of a large posterity; you have means that are abundant, and an excellent and distinguished line, which cannot be blotted out without the commission of a wicked crime and without grave consequences for the country. Then too your age is sound, good looks are not wanting, and you have the opportunity to take as a wife a girl as virtuous and distinguished as your fellow-citizens have ever seen, pure, modest, respectful, divinely beautiful, with an abundant dowry. Although your friends beg you, your kinsfolk shed tears, your relatives press you, your country requests it, and the very ashes of your ancestors

implore this of you from the tomb, do you still hesitate and still contemplate celibacy?

If what was asked of you were something dishonourable or difficult, still the prayers of your kin or the affection of your family should have prevailed over your desire. How much more reasonable it is that the tears of your friends, respect for your country, and your affection for your ancestors should win from you a decision to which you are urged by laws divine and human alike, impelled by nature, led by reason, drawn by honour, attracted by so many advantages, and even compelled by necessity itself? But this is more than enough argument. I am certain that you have long since changed your mind at my prompting, and have turned your thoughts to more useful plans.'

It will be of great advantage to be thoroughly practised in this persuasive class, by far the most useful and most important of all. First one must give careful thought to exactly what it is that one wishes to persuade someone to do. Next we shall carefully bring together all the advantages inherent in it and enlarge upon them; on the other hand, we shall either de-emphasize or ignore any disadvantages that might seem capable of discouraging him, mustering as many reasons, proofs of reasons, and amplifications as we can. The commonplaces included must suit the subject,[112] as in this example it was fitting to use the theme that the instinct to propagate one's own species is present in all things; also that the human race is worn down by a thousand maladies and a thousand mischances; that nothing in this life is pleasant without a partner; that old age and death are easier to bear if one has children. Finally one must see by what forms of argumentation or with what embellishments the material that has been thought out can be presented most advantageously.

48 / The dissuasive class

In dissuasion we shall gather together all the disadvantages. I shall demonstrate briefly later how these are to be discovered; they should be thought out and kept ready at hand, so to speak. The teacher should propose a cleverly contrived discussion, a summary of reasons, examples, and parallels; and if he wishes, he may point out the arrangement in a few words, leaving the rest to the pupils' ingenuity. Next he should criticize their arguments, and then tell them to write a recantation. Sometimes, to sharpen their wits, he should propose disagreeable subjects. One might be asked, for instance, to defend poverty, exile, ingratitude, illness, contempt of study, neglect of language, or tyranny, or to argue that an old man should

47 / An example of a letter of persuasion

129

1 letter of persuasion] The original version of this letter, entitled *Declamatio in genere suasorio de laude matrimonii*, issued from the press of Dirk Martens on

30 March 1518 as one of four declamations. This edition was reproduced by Nicolas Caesar in Cologne 20 May 1518 and then by Froben on 30 August of the same year with the title *Encomium matrimonii*, which it would retain in subsequent editions. The actual writing of the declamation, if we are to give credit to Erasmus' description in the *Lucubrationes*, goes back to a much earlier period. He says there that he wrote these declamatory compositions for the amusement of his pupil, Lord Mountjoy, thus some time towards the end of his Parisian sojourn and before his first trip to England. From certain historical allusions made in the Siberch edition, Margolin concludes that the piece must have been written between April 1498 and April 1499 (ASD I–2 198 and I–5 338). In August 1522 the text, with considerable revision and additions, became part of *De conscribendis epistolis*, appearing as another specimen of the *epistola suasoria*, although it continued to be published separately as the *Encomium matrimonii*. Whether it went under the guise of an *encomium* or *declamatio* or *epistola suasoria*, the treatise enjoyed an immense vogue, becoming a *succès de scandale*. From the first it also drew heavy censure from theologians. As early as 21 February 1519, Jan Briart, vice-chancellor, in solemn session of the University of Louvain, branded the work as a veiled attack against ecclesiastical celibacy and monasticism. Erasmus' response was ready within a week, although it did not appear in print until May of 1519 as the *Apologia pro declamatione matrimonii*. The main arguments of the defense were that the composition was merely a rhetorical exercise, not a *concio sacra*, that he had also written a counter-argument against matrimony, and that the exhortation should be understood in the context of the particular circumstances of the fictitious letter. The supposed recantation which appeared in *De conscribendis epistolis* (145–8 below) is, as might be expected, much less forceful than the first letter. These rather specious arguments did not succeed in placating his critics. Other denunciations followed, the *Propugnaculum Ecclesiae adversus Lutheranos* of Josse Clichtove and the *Annotationes Natalis Bedae* both appearing in May of 1526. Once again Erasmus was quick to respond. In July 1526 his *Institutio christiani matrimonii* dedicated to Catherine of Aragon appeared, a treatise which, far from being a retraction, reaffirms his views on marriage. The debate continued with formal condemnation by the Sorbonne of Erasmian teachings and a succession of apologiae from Erasmus. Le Chevalier Louis de Berquin, who translated the treatise into French in 1525, was condemned for heresy and burned at the stake in the Place de la Grève on 17 April 1529.

2 cradle] Cf *Adagia* I vii 52.

130

3 wedding] At Cana, the scene of Christ's first miracle; John 2:1–11

4 Marriage ... infamous] A passage added to the 1518 text; see Emile Telle *Erasme et le septième sacrement* (Geneva 1954) 185.

5 Lycurgus] Legendary Spartan law-giver

6 Solon] See 13:n10 above.

7 increase ... earth] Gen 9:1

8 For this cause ... wife] Mark 10:7

131

9 It is only dissolved] Added in *1534* (LB I 415E)

10 extraordinary favour] Turning water into wine

11 sacrament] To favour his argument Erasmus here uses the Vulgate translation of Eph 5:32 rather than his usual rendering, *mysterium*, as in the *Novum Testamentum* (LB VI 856A). He omits the qualifying phrase 'verum ego loquor,' which limits the application of the term to the union of Christ and his church. See Telle *Erasme et le septième sacrement* 162 and 257–71.

132

12 honourable ... undefiled] Heb 13:4

13 by the apostle Paul] Added in *1534* (LB I 416B)

14 Nor is it excused ... no praise] Added in *1534* (LB I 416C)

15 barren wedlock] Implied in Exod 23:26; Deut 7:14; Mal 3:11

16 Deuteronomy] 7:14

17 Leah] Gen 29:31

18 Psalms] 127:3

19 But if the law ...] Text to 133 added in *1534* (LB I 416D–417B).

20 laws of the Hebrews] Deut 20:7

21 Roman laws] The *lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus* (18 BC) and the *lex Papia Poppaea* (AD 9), both passed under the emperor Augustus

22 penalty] Disqualification from receiving legacies. The *lex Papia Poppaea* restricted the rights of bachelors, spinsters, and childless couples to inherit property.

23 offices of the state] They were given a low priority as candidates for office.

24 law of three children] Those who had three legitimate children were accorded certain privileges by Augustus' marriage legislation, including seniority for holding magistracies. Under later emperors these privileges came to be granted as a favour regardless of the number of children.

25 Constantine] 'The Great,' emperor 306–37 AD. The reference is to *Codex Theodosius* 8.16.1 (320 AD). This constitution is usually ascribed to Christian influence.

26 censor] He was not actually censor, but was granted censorial powers in 29–8 BC. The legislation banning marriage for soldiers was probably introduced by Augustus (Suetonius *Augustus* 24.1). This law was not revoked until 536 AD; *Novellae* 22.14. The incident is recounted also in *Apophthegmata* LB IV 210C, but no ancient source has been found.

133

27 Miscella] The two Augustan laws mentioned above, which established the *ius trium liberorum*, were referred to as the *lex Julia Miscella* (*Codex Justinianus* 6.40.2–3), from which title it was erroneously inferred in the early Byzantine period that they had been introduced by a supposed Julius Miscella (*Novellae* 22.43). The rules discussed here are a rather garbled version of *Codex Justinianus* 6.40.1–3.

28 Ulpian] Roman jurist (third century AD). The passage refers to *Digest* 24.3.1.

29 eligible for inheritance] Restrictions were imposed by the laws of Augustus. See note on penalty 132:n22 above.

30 void] The property of unmarried or childless heirs passed to heirs with children or to the state.
31 satirist] Juvenal 9.87–8
32 Five children] *Codex Justinianus* 5.66.1
33 guardianship] If no guardians of children were nominated by will, this duty fell to the nearest agnate. See *Institutiones Justiniani* 1.16.7.
34 Julian ... decurion] *Codex Theodosianus* 12.1.55. The decurion was a councillor in a country town; the office was obligatory on all appointed to undertake it.
35 Albinus] Personage and anecdote unknown. It is mentioned by Dio Cassius, 69.23.3, that Hadrian lightened penalties in proportion to the number of offspring. The classical source is *Digest* XLVIII 20.7.3.
36 Lycurgus] Plutarch *Lycurgus* 15
37 Roman law] Prior to Christianity Roman law did not impose capital punishment on citizen adulterers, but sanctioned their execution *in flagrante delicto* by injured husbands (or fathers). Augustus' *lex Julia de adulteriis* re-enacted this, but also imposed economic sanctions and relegation to an island.
38 laws of the Hebrews] Deut 22:22
39 fourfold] See Gaius *Institutiones* 3.177.189.

134

40 Pliny] *Naturalis historia* 13.7.31
41 particularly in palm trees] Added in *1534* (LB I 417E)
42 male tree] *Naturalis historia* 13.7.34–5
43 The same writer ... produces] Added in *1534* (LB I 417F)
44 precious stones] For instance the onyx *Naturalis historia* 37.24.90ff), sardonyx (37.23.86ff), and sapphire (36.47.198)
45 heavens turning] See Lucretius *De rerum natura* 5.1436, 'templum versatile mundi.'
46 giants] Cf Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.184; often used in classical literature to represent rebellion against the natural order.

135

47 promiscuity] See Horace *Ars poetica* 398.
48 For a man ... destruction] Added in *1534* (LB I 418B)
49 poets'] For instance, Virgil in *Georgics* 4.454ff
50 Gamelius] Epithet designating Jupiter's function of presiding over marriages
51 Lucina] Epithet of the goddess in her role of bringing children into the world
52 *pronuba*] Divine counterpart of the Roman matron who conducted the bride into the bridal chamber
53 Britons ... earth] Horace *Odes* 1.35.28–30; no doubt this comment was meant to amuse Mountjoy and Erasmus' other English friends.
54 tiger ... cubs] Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.25.66
55 donkeys] *Naturalis historia* 8.68.169

136

56 the father of many generations] Gen 12:3
57 lengthy servitude] Jacob served his uncle Laban for seven years hoping to

obtain the hand of Rachel, but when he was given Leah in her stead, he served for another seven years; Gen 29:15–30.

58 flock of wives] Kings 11:1–3

59 oracle of Apollo] In reply to the enquiry of his friend Chaerephon

60 members] Cf Chaucer The Wife of Bath's Prologue: 'Telle me also to what conclusion / Were members maad of generation.'

61 It must be ... creatures] Added in *1534* (LB I 419A)

137

62 Essenes] A small community of Jews who lived mostly around the Dead Sea, practised extreme ascetism, and were firm believers in celibacy; Erasmus often refers to monks by this term, intended as pejorative.

63 eunuchs] Matt 19:12

64 among the married] See Allen Ep 1211:456–9.

65 divorce] See Matt 19:6.

66 source of revenue] Erasmus repeats this accusation in commenting on 1 Tim 3:2 (LB VI 934C) and in *De interdictu esu carnium* (LB IX 1201F). The Fourth Lateran Council and the Council of Basel explicitly condemned this abuse.

138

67 as one commoner ... another] Added in *1534* (LB I 419F)

68 brother] Deut 25:5

69 Jerome] He exalts virginity over marriage, especially in the tracts against Jovinian and Helvidius. Jerome wrote a long justification of these views in a letter to his friend Pammachius, *Letters* 49.

70 chaste and pure matrimony] See *Institutio matrimonii christiani* of 1526, dedicated to Catherine of Aragon.

71 Turks] Erasmus' sane remarks about the crusade against the Turks centre on the idea that the Turks must be converted by good deeds and innocence of life rather than by arms. Cf Ep 858 to Paul Volz, written in 1518; *Adagia* IV i 1 'Dulce bellum inexpertis'; *Querela pacis* (LB IV 638B).

72 baptize their children] In the *Ecclesiastes* (LB V 934A–B) Erasmus says that the baptizing of infants was no way to enlist soldiers for Christ.

73 No nation] Passage to 139:18 (ASD I–2 419:20–420:15) was an addition to the 1518 text.

74 the man] Onan; see Gen 38:9.

139

75 physical union] 'two in one flesh'; Gen 2:24; Matt 19:5

140

76 Timon] The Athenian misanthrope; Erasmus translated Lucian's dialogue *Timon sive misanthropos* ASD I–1 489–505

77 tiny Aeneas] Virgil *Aeneid* 4.328–9

78 Horace] *Odes* 1.13.17–20

141

79 Death ... all] *Adagia* III ix 12

80 adulteress] Possibly referring to Clytemnestra, who murdered her husband Agamemnon
81 Cornelia] Second daughter of Scipio Africanus, mother of the Gracchi, a very cultured woman who embodied all the ideals of the virtuous Roman matron; the list of 'good women' that begins here corresponds closely to one found in Valerius Maximus *Facta et dicta memorabilia* 4.6.
82 Alcestis] Heroine of a play of Euripides, who volunteers to die in the place of her husband, Admetus
83 Julia] Daughter of Julius Caesar, who married Pompey at her father's bidding
84 Portia] Wife of Brutus, who took her life at the news of her husband's death
85 Artemisia] Wife of Mausolus, satrap of Caria, to whose memory she built the Mausoleum c 353 BC
86 Hypsicratea] Concubine of Mithridates (see 32:n18 above), who had the courage and daring of a man, so that the king was wont to call her Hypsicrates; Plutarch *Pompey* 32.8
87 Aemilia Tertia] Third daughter of L. Aemilius Paulus, wife of Scipio Africanus and mother of Cornelia, who bore the Gracchi
88 Turia] Wife of G. Lucretius Vespillo, who concealed her husband during the proscriptions of 43–2 BC, until he was pardoned
89 Lucretia] Her violation by the son of Tarquin and subsequent suicide contributed to the expulsion of the kings from Rome; see 26:n41 above.
90 Lentula] Virtuous wife of Lucius Cornelius Lentulus, who fought in the battle of Pharsalus
91 Arria] The wife of Caecina Paetus, who stabbed herself in the presence of her husband, condemned in 42 AD for his part in a conspiracy against Claudius; this tale is narrated in Pliny *Epistles* 3.16.
92 rare bird] Horace *Satires* 2.2.26; Juvenal 6.165; *Adagia* II i 21; *Colloquia* ASD I–3 698

142

93 wise man] Jesus, son of Sirach; Prov 12:4; 18:22
94 Consider ... love for them] Added to the 1518 text (ASD I–2 424:9–16)
95 Maurice] Probably a reference to Thomas More, who married Alice Middleton after a one-month widowhood. Cf Le Chevalier de Berquin *Déclamation des louanges de mariage* ed Emile Telle (Geneva 1976) 52 n2.
96 Jovius] Telle, ibidem, interprets the name as a reference to Mountjoy, already married to his fourth wife when the *Encomium matrimonii* was published.
97 Xerxes] In 480 BC, when leading his army into Greece. The story is told in Herodotus *Histories* 7.45–6; and Nepos *Themistocles* 2.4. The length of years is usually given as a hundred, as in *Apophthegmata* LB IV 231B.

143

98 Death hovers all around us] See Horace *Satires* 2.1.58.
99 Essenes] See 137:n62 above.
100 Dulopolites] There was a Dulopolis in Caria which was noted for its brigands (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 5.29.104), but here a play upon the meaning of the name, 'city of slaves,' is probably intended.

101 bees] See Virgil *Georgics* 4.197–202.
102 from the earth] See Lucretius *De rerum natura* 5.805–17, and the story of Cadmus sowing the dragon's teeth.
103 like mice in Egypt] Added in *1534* (LB I 423B); there was no plague of mice among the Egyptian plagues, but 1 Kings 6 records one among the Philistines.
104 from the throwing of stones] As in the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha repeopling the earth
105 as in the fables] Added in *1534* (LB I 423B)
106 trees] Perhaps a reminiscence of the Homeric tag, 'you were not born from oak or crag,' *Iliad* 22.126, familiar to Erasmus
107 abolition of mankind] Erasmus is at variance here with his friend Colet, who was prepared to face this possibility
108 where no women marry] Matt 22:30

144

109 daughters of Lot] Gen 19:30–5
110 Hippolytus] Vowed to the chaste goddess Artemis, he rejected women.
111 or who ... small] Added in *1534* (LB I 423F)

145

112 must suit the subject] Added in *1534* (LB I 424C)